

combat in South or North Vietnam. Nor is there evidence that we were asked in by a friendly government, which is one of the administration's allegations. President Eisenhower's letter to Diem of October 1954, makes clear that the initiative for the offer of aid came through him and not from Diem, although that would not have mattered, since Diem was our puppet brought by us from the United States. In any event, President Eisenhower merely offered economic aid, and that subject to many conditions in the way of reforms and improvement of performance, which were never carried out.

President Kennedy mistakenly took the advice of Secretary McNamara—whose forecasts have proved consistently wrong—by sending in a large number of advisers, perhaps to a total of 15,000. But these were merely advisers. It is only in this administration that we have sent troops into combat and started bombing.

I applaud President Johnson's efforts to get to the conference table, but unless the premises are altered, unless we are willing to confess error, unless we are willing to admit that there has been as much, if not more, aggression by us than by the opposition, unless we are willing to admit that we engaged ourselves on one side of a civil war—and obviously the less popular side—and unless we are willing to negotiate with the people who are actually doing most of the fighting, the National Liberation Front or Vietcong, all peace offers are going to be ineffective and devoid of real meaning.

We have been supporting a corrupt, unpopular regime, and alleging that we are fighting for freedom. The evidence to that effect is conspicuously lacking.

In the course of my long fight against our present involvement in an undeclared war in Vietnam, I have received thousands of letters from every section of the country—from people from all walks of life—supporting my position.

Thus from a minister and his wife living in Ann Arbor, Mich., I received a letter reading in part:

In the good name of our American ideals and purposes, and in the name of sanity, we urge you to resist any pressure to make a formal declaration of war.

We believe that our Government should be willing to negotiate with the National Liberation Front. We believe our Government should be looking for ways to form an interim government in Vietnam under international arrangements which would make a ceasefire possible. We believe that we should be using the United Nations in a search for ways to get the negotiations started. We believe we should honor the commitment which we made when we joined the United Nations to settle our disputes peacefully. We believe that any widening of the war in Vietnam is morally indefensible—and that it threatens the entire world with intolerable destruction. We believe our present policy of counting most heavily on military solutions is losing us the respect of peoples throughout Asia and Africa—who have a far better ability to understand the needs and aspirations of Asians in this moment of history—and whose friendship we need.

From a couple in Palo Alto, Calif., comes this sage advice:

We think it is terribly important that the whole question of the Vietnam war be de-

bat is not the only reason that an honest government getting out, the more able will be our Government to make peace and still have the respect of its people and the confidence of those governments around the world which look to us for support. It would be a great step forward for the American people if we could be sufficiently impressed by arguments primarily concerned with the morality, or lack of it, of our being in Vietnam. But there are plenty of arguments against our continuing there from the most practical point of view and people like Senator MANSFIELD and General Gavin are helping to supply these. President Johnson needs the latter type particularly, since he is an eminently practical man.

From a doctor in New York City comes the plea:

Please continue all efforts to avoid resumption of bombing, to seek negotiated settlement, and to end this dishonorable war in Vietnam.

Thank you and congratulations.

From a housewife in Wilton, Conn., comes this statement:

We know we cannot win militarily in Vietnam and that the problem of the Communist threat will not be settled there. Why must we kill our young men, and the Vietnamese, to prove this?

This is a protest against enlarging the war and the resumption of bombing, and a plea for ingenuity and direct action to bring about negotiations before it is too late.

From a lady in Honolulu, Hawaii, comes this letter:

Thank you for your appeal to President Johnson to continue the suspension of U.S. bombing in North Vietnam.

It is of the utmost importance that Congress retain control of foreign policy, and use the help of United Nations.

More power to the brave 15.

From a man who has lived in Vietnam for a number of years comes this letter:

As one who has lived in Vietnam for a number of years, I can only express to you my support and appreciation for the courageous position which you took last week on the question of U.S. policy in that unhappy country.

I think that it cannot be denied that America's best interests are not being served by a continuance of the policy which we have been following in Vietnam in recent years, a policy which has only served to alienate the Vietnamese people and Asians generally.

I hope that the Senate will continue to encourage a public examination of this ill-conceived policy.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that a representative sampling of the letters I have received be printed at the conclusion of my remarks, giving only the sender's initials, the town or city and State of the sender.

There being no objection, the representative sampling of letters was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

NORTHAMPTON, PA.

Senator ERNEST GRUENING,
 U.S. Senate,
 Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR GRUENING: Just a note to let you know we admire your outspokenness on the Vietnam situation. It is indeed refreshing to note that there still are some clear heads in the Senate who can view a situation through wide-angle vision instead of the myopic nearsightedness of some of our leaders and have the initiative to speak out for the wishes of the American people. Since 1945, American image throughout the world has been on a steady decline, and this can be attributed to nothing other than the bungling policies of our State Department, probably acting on misleading information supplied them by the CIA and ambassadorial services.

More power to you. I only wish more like you.
 Respectfully,
 H. H. H. H.

CONFESSION OF ERROR FOR OUR VIETNAM POLICY IS NEEDED

Mr. GRUENING. Mr. President, will the distinguished Senator from South Carolina yield?

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may yield to the distinguished Senator from Alaska under the same conditions that I heretofore yielded to the distinguished Senator from North Carolina.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. GRUENING. Mr. President, to the 15 and more of my colleagues who urged the President not to resume bombing, his decision to do so is a matter of deep regret. Bombing of North Vietnam for 10 months proved totally ineffective to achieve the objectives which its proponents sought, and indeed, merely stiffened the resistance which our forces encountered.

I have received a great number of letters from all over the country approving the action of my 15 colleagues and myself. Some of these letters which were written just before the resumption are illustrative of the widespread feeling in this country.

While I have urged for nearly 2 years that the action which the President has now taken, for laying the issue before the Security Council of the United Nations, is most welcome, it would have had a better prospect of success if it had not been accompanied by a resumption of bombing which largely nullifies this sadly belated move. Had this been done right after President Johnson's election, as it was widely assumed, in view of his campaign utterances that some such action would take place, it would have had a much greater chance of success. I am still hopeful that despite the ghastly sacrifice of lives and treasure that have taken place since that time, it may not be too late to secure a ceasefire and a solution at the conference table.

Of course, it is no secret that I disagree wholly with the premises on which our steadily escalating military intervention in southeast Asia is based. The record, as set forth in an official publication by our administration, entitled: "Why Vietnam?" clearly indicates there was no national commitment, no solemn pledge for us to send our young men into